

Birdwatching at Point Reyes

Point Reyes National Seashore offers some of the finest birdwatching in the United States with more than 470 avian species observed in the park and on adjacent waters.

- More than 70,000 acres of habitat harbor an incredible diversity of bird life.
- The park's coastal location and its wealth of unspoiled habitats attract many migrating and wintering birds.
- The projection of the peninsula some 10 miles seaward from the geologic mainland make Point Reyes National Seashore an attractive landing spot for many vagrants—birds that have made errors in navigation and thus are unexpected in this area.

All of these factors account for one of the highest numbers of diversity in the nation during the annual Christmas bird count and attracts birdwatchers from around the world.

To aid in the identification of species in their preferred habitats, the *Alexandra Kruse* following guide has been developed. You can refer to the reference map on the other side of this sheet for orientation.

Land and Wetland Areas

The **Bear Valley area** harbors a great variety of land birds along the trails criss-crossing the Inverness ridge to the ocean. Warblers, sparrows, kinglets, thrushes, wrens, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, crossbills, and owls can often be seen.

Olema Marsh, the largest fresh water marsh in Marin County, supports marsh, water and riparian species including belted kingfishers. At high tide, egrets and herons feed on In winter, green-backed herons, hooded mergansers, ring-necked ducks, and grebes can be seen at Five Brooks Pond. In the grasses and trees watch for pileated woodpeckers, swallows, accipiters, warblers, and thrushes.

Tomales Point offers an outstanding place to find birds of prey during fall and winter months. In winter look for owls, peregrine falcons, and hawks. Passerines feed on seeds and insects in this area.

Oceans, Estuaries, Bays, and Lagoons

Abbotts Lagoon is an excellent place to view winter ducks and raptors. Black-shouldered kites are commonly seen in winter and fall. This is also sensitive nesting area for the federally threatened western snowy plover. Please tread carefully on the sandy beaches during the spring and early summer months.



From top left, great egret, common murre, and brown pelican.



NPS Collection



NPS Collection

including rails and voles.

grebes can be

accipit-

Tomales Bay and Bolinas Lagoon are important for wintering waterfowl including three species of scoters and Brant geese. Osprey, shorebirds, herons, and egrets can be seen all year. During the winter herring run, Tomales Bay may contain 25,000 diving birds, mostly Greater Scaup, scoters and Bufflehead.

In **Drakes and Limantour Esteros**, abundant water, shore, and marsh birds include loons, Brown and White Pelicans, grebes, herons, egrets, terns, and brants.

Outer Peninsula

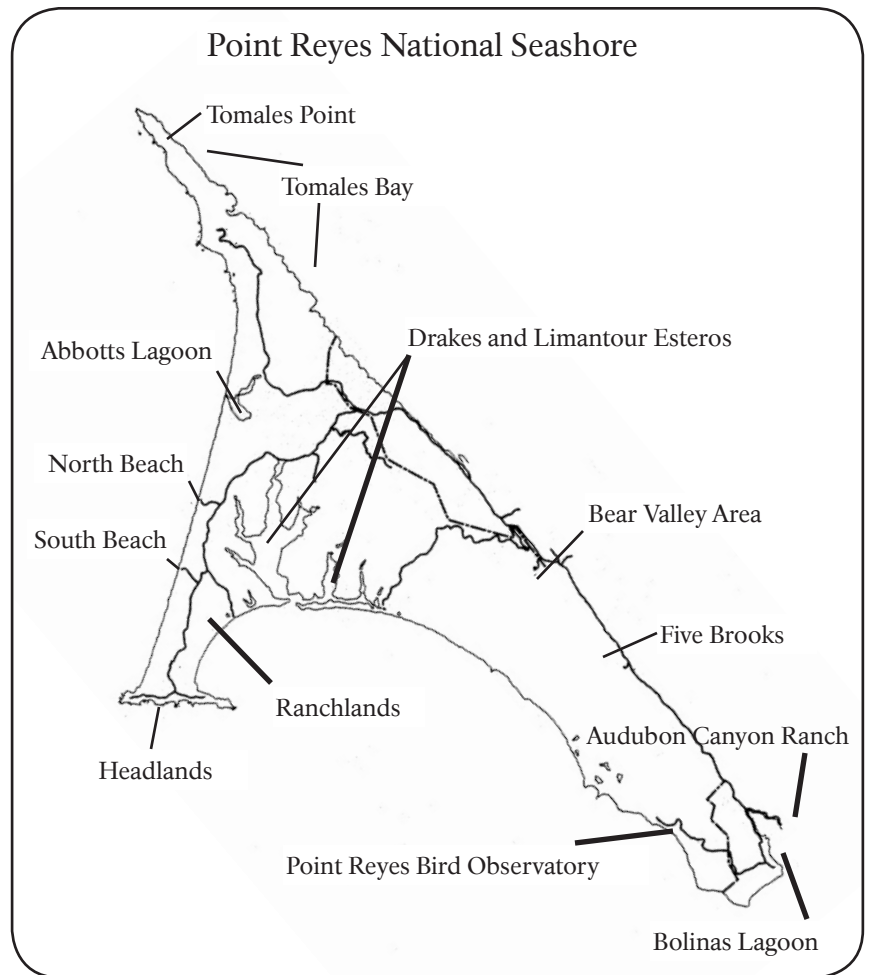
In the **ranchlands** of the park, look for autumn ground dwellers including Pacific Golden Plovers and up to 4 species of longspurs and migrating and resident hawks. In spring and particularly fall, look for vagrant passerines and raptors. Dairy ranches are Seashore property leased back to the ranchers. Please respect property rights and privacy. Avoid buildings, gardens, and farmyards. Leave all gates just as you find them and do not block any gates with cars. You may wish to consider carpooling to these areas in order to reduce traffic congestion.

Lighthouse rocks and cliff areas offer a variety of birding through out the year. Brown Pelicans in summer and fall, numerous oceanic and migrating species in spring. Most common spring coastal birds include 3 species of cormorants, common murres, pigeon guillemots, loons, grebes and scoters. Watch for black oystercatchers all year. Peregrine falcons are seen regularly. Thousand of Common Murres nest on rocks near the lighthouse and tufted puffins are occasionally seen in the spring and early summer.

Other Areas

The **Point Reyes Bird Observatory** is a scientific research station located in the Palomarin area at the southern end of the Seashore. Visitors can observe bird banding and mist netting Tuesday-Sunday from, May 1st-Thanksgiving and Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, from Thanksgiving-April 30th. The visitor center is open sunrise to sunset year round. Please call 415-868-0655 or 415-868-1221 ext. 40 for additional information. www.prbo.org

The **Audubon Canyon Ranch** is a wildlife sanctuary located south of the Seashore on Highway 1. Open to the public mid-March through mid-July. Call 415-868-9244 for times and dates. www.egret.org



To Aid You in Your Efforts